

# *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

## **Study Guide Student Copy**

### **Chapter 1 - In Which the Reader is Introduced to a Man of Humanity**

#### **Vocabulary**

bedropped—spotted, covered

pious—religious

grotesque—fantastic

piquant—engaging

elucidations—explanations

prevalence—dominance

counterpoise—counterbalance

patriarchal—fatherly

adroitly—skillfully

magnanimity—generosity

incredulity—disbelief

1. Briefly describe Mr. Shelby and Mr. Haley. Why do you think Mr. Shelby is referred to as having "...the appearance of a gentleman..."? (Pg. 1)
  
2. How does Mr. Shelby describe Tom? Why does he think Tom is a valuable slave?
  
3. What is ironic about the following passage from this chapter?  
"I am sorry to part with Tom, I must say. You ought to let him cover the whole balance of the debt; and you would, Haley, if you had any conscience." (Pg. 2)
  
4. Define quadroom. Why do Eliza and her son Harry catch the eye of the slave trader?

5. Define Jim Crow. Why do you think Mr. Shelby calls Harry "Jim Crow"?

6. In the following excerpts from the story, both Mr. Shelby and Mr. Haley profess to be "humane" men. What is ironic about their claims? Who do you think Stowe is referring to in the title of this chapter, "In Which the Reader is Introduced to a Man of Humanity"?

"I would rather not sell him," said Mr. Shelby, thoughtfully; "the fact is, sir, I'm a humane man, and I hate to take the boy from his mother, sir."  
(Pg. 5)

"And I lays it all to my management, sir; and humanity, sir, I may say, is the great pillar of *my* management." (Pg. 6)

7. Stowe frequently breaks away from the story, in an aside, to speak directly to the reader. Find an example of an aside in this chapter.

8. Who is Tom Loker? Why did Haley "break off with him"?

9. What is the "shadow of the law" that hangs over the slaves in Kentucky? Why is slavery in Kentucky an example of the "mildest form of the system of slavery"?

10. Briefly describe Mrs. Shelby. In what way might she be called "blind"?

## Chapter 2 - The Mother

### Vocabulary

petted—pampered

quadroon—person of 1/4 Negro ancestry

mulatto—person of Caucasian and Negro ancestry

hemp—a tough plant refined for use as rope

chattel—slave

ebullition—outburst

tranquillized—calmed

inducement—consideration

1. Stowe is frequently criticized for racially stereotyping the slaves in this book. In what ways does she stereotype Eliza and George Harris in this chapter?
2. What does George Harris do that makes his master "...feel an uneasy consciousness of inferiority"? (Pg. 11) How does his master punish George?
3. How does George demonstrate that he is not the kind of man who can "become a thing"?
4. "A very humane jurist once said, The worst use you can put a man to is to hang him. No; there is another use that a man can be put to that is worse!" (Pg. 13)

What in George's life is worse for him than hanging?

## **Chapter 3 - The Husband and Father**

### **Vocabulary**

dray-horse—horse adapted for pulling heavy loads

verandah—(usually spelled “veranda”) porch

1. In this chapter both George and Eliza express their opinions of slavery and how to survive its horrors. Briefly state their views and point out in what ways they differ.
2. What dangers does George see for his wife and son, even though they have a kind master?
3. Why does Eliza not tell George about her fear that Mr. Shelby might be planning to sell Harry?
4. How does George plan to escape his miserable life?

## Chapter 4 - An Evening in Uncle Tom's Cabin

### Vocabulary

multiflora rose—a thorny rose with clusters of small flowers  
vestige—trace  
indulgent—tolerant  
frizzling—frying until crisp and curled  
anon—immediately  
indubitable—unquestionable  
intimations—suggestions  
tea-rusks—tea-bread (crispy, dry bread)  
trussing—binding the wings and legs for cooking  
hoe-cake—small cake made of cornmeal  
dodgers—a cake that is cooked as a dumpling  
compeers—masters of ceremony  
congenial—pleasant  
daguerreotype—photo made on a glass plate, but in this case, it means “describe”  
edification—instruction  
facetious—witty  
sanguinary—optimistic  
benighted—unenlightened  
precipitately—headlong  
capering—frolic  
trundle bed—low bed on casters to fit under a higher bed when not in use  
unction—religious intensity  
obliged—favored

1. Briefly describe Aunt Chloe and Uncle Tom.
2. How do Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe feel about George Shelby's presence in their cabin?
3. What happens in Tom's cabin after their evening meal? Why are Tom's prayers appreciated by the other slaves?

4. Find an example of racial stereotyping in this chapter. In what way is Uncle Tom's dialect and his wife's dialect an example of racial stereotyping? (Hint: look at the dialogue in the previous chapter.)
5. For what reason can Mr. Shelby be called a hypocrite?
6. The title of a novel is often indicative of its overall message. At this point in the story, why do you think Stowe calls her book *Uncle Tom's Cabin*?

## Chapter 5 - Showing the Feelings of Living Property on Changing Owners

### Vocabulary

indignation—anger

intercede—mediate

pecuniary—monetary

abolitionist—person devoted to abolishing slavery

dilated—enlarged

adieu— (from the French) farewells, good-byes

affrighted—alarmed, frightened

1. One of the themes in this book is that of the definition of Christianity includes love and forgiveness for all people as well as self-sacrifice. List two ways Tom illustrates the concept of self-sacrifice in this chapter?

2. “This is God’s curse on slavery! - a bitter, bitter, most accursed thing! - a curse to the master and a curse to the slave! I was a fool to think I could make anything good out of such a deadly evil.” (Pg. 33)

What “good” is Mrs. Shelby trying to make out of the evil of slavery? Why does she believe she has failed? For what reason is slavery a “curse to the master”?

3. Support or refute the following statement by citing incidents from the story: Tom has more courage and moral fortitude than his master.

4. At the time this story was written, some critics questioned the actions of some of the slaves in the story. They believed the slaves were not accurately portraying real life. Read the following note Eliza leaves for Mrs. Shelby. Do you find this note to be believable? Cite incidents from the story to support your answer.

“O Missis! dear Missis! don’t think me ungrateful, - don’t think hard of me, any way, - I heard all you and master said to-night. I am going to try to save my boy - you will not blame me! God bless and reward you for all your kindness!” (Pg. 35)

5. Find an example of an aside in this chapter where Stowe tells the reader how to feel about Mr. Shelby’s decision to sell Tom and Harry.